2: Williams E, G-5 (1923-1925) 1928
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ness them. Thus the seer, the neurotic, and the madman gain a power and ascendancy over the normal by their very abnormality.

It is not by any means maintained that the mutations of culture have their invariable rise in dreams, sane or insane. But the frequency with which these have been put forward as explanations of the new cults makes it possible that they are at least to some extent the original source of them. If this be really so, then we see movements of importance based on the baseless fabric of dreams or even on the hallucinations of the insane.

The Spread of the Taro Cult. It was suggested that the spread of the Taro movement, rather than its actual origin, was a matter of practical interest. The general methods of its dissemination have already been described. It is here proposed to debate this question anew and to suggest reasons why the dissemination has been so complete and so successful. The matter might be considered from two angles—the acceptability of the cult and the susceptibility of the native.

(1) *The Acceptability of the Cult.* We have seen the reputedly conservative native receiving with open arms a very considerable change in his religious life. But we have also noted the newest or the most startling features of the Taro cult toning down so as to harmonize better with the existent cultural background. I refer to the way in which the worship of the taro spirits, an idea which is alien to native habits of thought, has gradually yielded place to the old-fashioned worship of the dead.

While this adaptation has taken place the general activities of the cult have remained the same. The feasting, the singing, and the placatory offerings are performed or offered with the same zeal, no matter whether they are in behalf of the taro plant itself or of the dead. The *iipari* is still indulged in with the same abandon, no matter whether the taro spirits or the dead have inspired it. This all bears out the view that, in native religion, theory or doctrine is wholly subordinate to action or

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ritual.[1] And this view is further substantiated by the general fact that those who carry out all the observances of the Taro cult with precision and confidence are often ignorant of or indifferent to its theories.

Furthermore, we must credit the new cult with a large degree of adaptability. It has conformed to native standards of hospitality—one might say prodigality; it has given a fillip to the power of the medicine-men; it has inspired the food quest with a new enthusiasm. It fits in, so to speak, with native customs and native interests. And what is more, it has never, as far as I know, been antagonistic toward existing ceremonies. (If it has interfered with these ceremonies it has done so simply by replacing rather than by opposing them.)

It is by virtue of these two facts, I believe, that the Taro cult has proved so acceptable to the Orokaiva. First, it is primarily a ceremonial, not a faith; second, it is conformable to native interests. From this acceptability of the Taro cult we might perhaps draw a lesson. Compared with its sweeping advance the slow and laborious progress of Christianity among the natives might be thought discouraging. It is true that Christianity is much farther removed from existent native culture than is the Taro cult, and consequently more subject to the hostility of native conservatism, so that it would be entirely unjust to make a fifty-fifty comparison. And it may well be that exponents of Christianity would be averse to adapting their religion too closely to native customs in order simply to make it agreeable. However, it is in this direction, I consider, that the best tactical approach lies for mission enterprise.

It is essential that we bear in mind the emotional aspect of primitive religion, and remember that unless religion provides some emotional satisfaction it fails to fulfil what is perhaps its principal *raison d'être*. The Taro cult—which is obviously enough a religious movement if we allow a proper wideness to the term—gives its devotees

[1] Cf. 'Vailala Madness', pp. 38–9.

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more to *do* than to think about, and it gives them what they like doing. Besides that it is intermixed with all the pursuits and interests of their daily life. It is probably safe to say that native religions are usually associated with, or rather embody, a deal of ceremonial, of dressing-up, of feasting, and of high excitement. These things, which may seem mere frills and furbelows to those who follow a sterner creed, are in primitive religion of far greater relative importance. A religion without such attractions is hardly likely to be acceptable to the native, especially because it is too completely separated from his other interests.

Would it be possible or permissible to adorn Christianity in a manner more attractively, to exchange its sometimes too sombre habit for the gayer and more cheerful hues which are better in keeping with native taste? This suggestion has regard not to belief (for there is more than enough of fear and unquiet in native belief which Christianity can replace), but to religion in its manual or ceremonial aspect. A new native religion, like the old, should possess an attractive and engrossing ceremonial, and it should not despise the mere dressing-up, dancing, and feasting, but should actually incorporate them. If Christianity cannot condescend to employ such methods, if it cannot adapt itself so that the Christianity of the native is part and parcel of his life, in which he takes really spontaneous interest and pleasure, then in my opinion Christianity is not suitable for him.

No side of the native's life is more important than the religious and ceremonial side. This is so in his own estimation even more than in ours. That the native, whose civilization is so severely shaken by the impact of our own, needs care and sympathy in the rebuilding of his religion is a truth which all save the hopelessly materialistic will recognize. But religion is made for man, not man for religion. There are so many varieties of both that we might make due provision for their mutual suitability. While anthropology is not called

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II.

A. C. Haddon.

The following article was written a year before receiving Mr Chinnery's communication. I think it advisable to let both papers appear together, as they throw light upon each other.

The natives of the Kumusi, and more especially of the Mambare Divisions, must be in an excited condition, for the new cults noted by Mr Chinnery do not seem to be related with the somewhat earlier cult to which I call attention, nor is there any evidence of the slightest connection between these and the abortive message of the Milne Bay "prophet." It is interesting to observe that M. Moszkowski[1] records a Messiah belief among the coast tribes of the Mamberamo, a river that opens by Cape D'Urville, in Netherlands New Guinea, at the eastern limit of Geelvink Bay. He says that there is everywhere met with amongst the coastal tribes a belief in Manseren Korēri, an ancient culture hero, and that the belief is certainly older than the first appearance of the missionaries. Very long ago there lived, according to this belief, a man endowed with supernatural and divine powers. He gave the Papuans laws and regulations, and founded the men's ceremonial houses. But, because the Papuans gradually neglected his commands, one day he vanished. Yet, so the legend runs, he will eventually return, and then everything will be renewed. Therefore is he called Manseren Korēri, the god at whose return everything will cast its skin.

An awakening of religious activity is a frequent characteristic of periods of social unrest. The weakening or disruption of the older social order may stimulate new and often bizarre ideals, and these may give rise to religious movements that strive to sanction social or political aspirations. Communities that feel themselves oppressed anticipate the emergence of a hero who will restore their prosperity and prestige. And when the people are imbued with religious fervour the expected hero will be regarded as a Messiah. Phenomena of this kind are well known in history, and are not unknown at the present day among peoples in all stages of civilisation.[2]

It is significant that even among the savages of New

[1] *Zeitsch. f. Ethnol.*, xliii., 1911, p. 327.

[2] The Ghost Dances of the Indians of the Plains of N. America, which partake of a Messianic character, may serve as an example.

4: Chinnery & Haddon E-5 (ca. 1915) 1917
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Guinea fresh forms of religious activity come into being from time to time definitely as a reaction against the encroachment of the white man. But the mainspring of others is at present obscure, and appears to be more distinctly related to purely native ideas. These cults afford a valid ground of argument against the very prevalent notion of the permanence of all native institutions and of the supposed disinclination of primitive peoples to adopt new ideas or new cults. In the five instances we are here concerned with, the movement has been stopped by the Government, so there are no means of telling how permanent they might have become. They illustrate, at all events, the methods by which cults have probably spread in the past, and, as I have previously suggested,[1] we have evidence elsewhere of a definite propaganda. Indeed, we might go further, and admit that savages may occasionally have a missionary zeal which impels them to impart to the benighted heathen the ceremonial or cult that yields to themselves so much satisfaction. The new observations of Mr Chinnery indicate nervous conditions which, so far as I am aware, have not been previously recorded of the natives of New Guinea, although they conform to what is well known in other parts of the world.

1. THE BAIGONA CULT.—The Baigona cult is of interest because "it illustrates the growth of a movement which is developing into a new religion before our eyes. The sorcery of Baigona seems to be of the kind generally known as white magic, like the Babalau of the Motu, but there is a danger that it may develop into systematic extortion."[2] A large snake, called Baigona, which lives on Keroro (Mount Victory), first became known by killing a man and making all the other people ill. Later it took a man named Maine to the top of Keroro, cut out his heart, dried it in the sun, and then placed it over the fire in its house, so that it would get well smoked. Remaining on the top of the mountain, Maine was initiated into the mysteries of Baigona, and given certain medicines that would cure all diseases. Thereupon he was allowed to return to his village, taking his heart with him, which he hung up under the verandah of his house. Amongst other instructions received by Maine from Baigona was one to the effect that he should proceed up the coast and in certain centres appoint other "Baigona men," all of whom were to be junior to himself. This he did, and there are "Baigonas" all along the

[1] *Reports of the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits*, 1908, vi. pp. 44–46.

[2] Lieut.-Governor Murray, *Ann. Rep., Papua*, 1911–12, p. 14.

4: Chinnery & Haddon E-5 (ca. 1915)1917
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east of New Guinea. I think we can confidently attribute the coincidences to the fact that the two fishing populations have been affected in an analogous manner by the social unrest, and have also been more or less imbued with the Christian religion, the latter being especially evident in the Saibai cult. The prayers and exhortations were described to me as being "all the same as missionary talk," and the Christian God is acknowledged as supreme, working His will mainly through the instrumentality of the Spirits of dead islanders. One expression that was used, "Jesus on top, Jesus here," was meant to convey the idea that, though Jesus is in heaven, he is at the same time on earth, in communion with the believers in the new doctrine. There is no doubt that the leaders have so interwoven ideas derived from the Christian religion with racial animosity and a recrudescence of the vague ancestor cult of heathen times as to deceive, if not themselves, at all events their fellow islanders.

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